IN THE CLAIMS:

Please re-write the claims to read as follows:

1   1. (Original) A method for selecting a coprocessor from a plurality of coprocessors to

2   process a packet of a predetermined size, the method comprising the steps of:

3   determining a cost associated with the packet, the cost representing a load associ-

4   ated with processing the packet;

5   determining an anticipated load for each coprocessor in the plurality of coproces-

6   sors using the cost; and

7   selecting the coprocessor from the plurality of coprocessors based on the antici-

8   pated load.

1   2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining a cost further com-

2   prising the step of:

3   calculating the cost using a rate associated with processing the packet.

1   3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the rate is stored in a lookup table.

1   4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the step of calculating the cost further

2   comprising the step of:

3   dividing the packet's size by the rate.

1   5. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the step of calculating the cost further

2   comprising the step of:

3   multiplying the packet's size by a multiplicative inverse of the rate.

1   6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining a cost further com-

2   prising the step of:

3   applying the packet's size to a lookup table containing one or more cost values to

4   determine the cost.

1   7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining an anticipated load

2   further comprising the step of:

3   adding the cost to a cumulative load associated with each coprocessor in the plu-

4   rality of coprocessors.

1   8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of selecting the coprocessor fur-

2   ther comprising the step of:

3   selecting the coprocessor from a group of one or more coprocessors whose antici-

4   pated load is a minimum load.

1   9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the coprocessor is selected using a scheduling algorithm.

2   ing algorithm.

1   10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of selecting the coprocessor further comprising the step of:

2   ther comprising the step of:

3   determining if a port associated with the packet is congested.

1   11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the step of selecting the coprocessor further comprising the step of:

2   ther comprising the step of:

3   selecting the coprocessor from a group of one or more coprocessors whose antici-

4   pated load is not a minimum load.

1   12. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the step of selecting the coprocessor further comprising the step of:

2   ther comprising the step of:

3   selecting the coprocessor from a group of one or more coprocessors whose antici-

4   pated load is a minimum load.

1   13. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

2   incrementing a cumulative load associated with the selected coprocessor.

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1   14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the step of incrementing a cumulative

2   load further comprising the step of:

3   adding the cost to the cumulative load.

1   15. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

2   decrementing a cumulative load associated with the selected coprocessor.

1   16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the step of decrementing a cumulative

2   load further comprising the steps of:

3   subtracting the cost from the cumulative load.

1   17. (Original) An apparatus for selecting a coprocessor from a plurality of coprocessors

2   to process a packet of a predetermined size, the apparatus comprising:

3   a memory containing one or more software routines, including a software routine

4   configured to determine a cost associated with the packet, the cost representing a load

5   associated with processing the packet; and

6   a processor configured to execute the software routines to determine an antici-

7   pated load for each coprocessor in the plurality of coprocessors using the cost and to se-

8   lect the coprocessor from the plurality of coprocessors based on the anticipated load.

1   18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17 further comprising:

2   a data structure;

3   wherein the cost is determined using information contained in the data structure.

1   19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the information contained in the data

2   structure includes the cost.

1   20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the information contained in the data

2   structure includes a rate the coprocessor can process the packet.

1   21. (Original) An intermediate device configured to select a coprocessor from a plurality

2   of coprocessors to process a packet of a predetermined size, the intermediate device com-

3   prising:

4   means for determining a cost associated with the packet, the cost representing a

5   load associated with processing the packet;

6   means for determining an anticipated load for each coprocessor in the plurality of

7   coprocessors using the cost; and

8   means for selecting the coprocessor based on the anticipated load.

1   22. (Original) A computer readable media comprising:

2   the computer readable media containing computer executable instructions for execution

3   in a processor for the practice of a [the] method ~~of claim 1~~ for selecting a coproces-

4   sor from a plurality of coprocessors to process a packet of a predetermined size, the

5   method comprising the steps of:

6   determining a cost associated with the packet, the cost representing a load associ-

7   ated with processing the packet;

8   determining an anticipated load for each coprocessor in the plurality of coproces-

9   sors using the cost; and

10   selecting the coprocessor from the plurality of coprocessors based on the antici-

11   pated load.